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PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE

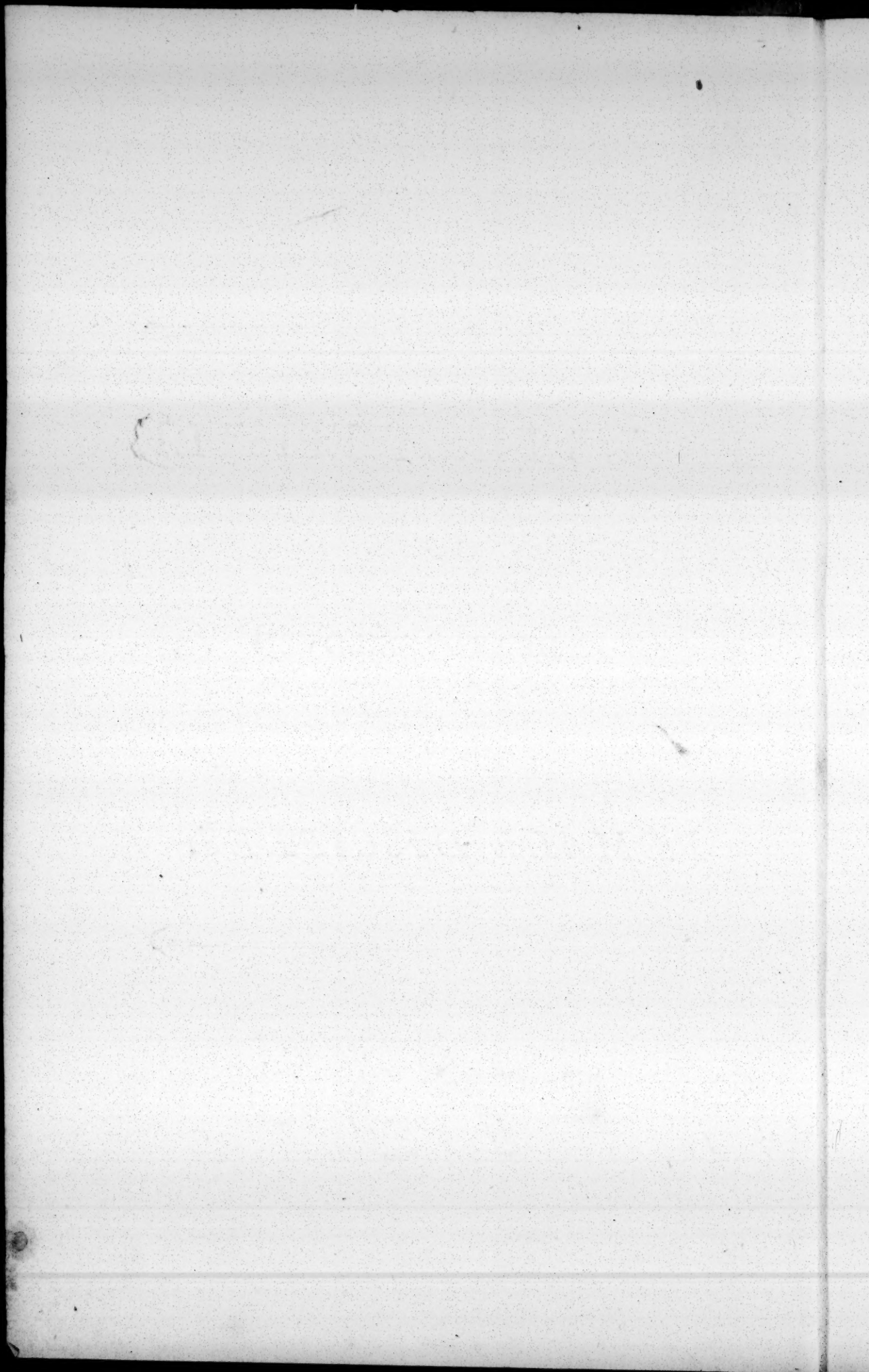
TO

THE DEARLY BELOVED

THE

FEMALE DISCIPLES.

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PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE

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THE

FEMALE DISCIPLES.

“ Forgive, O Ladies, ever dear,
Th’ effusions of a mind,
Whose darling wish is to appear
The FRIEND of WOMANKIND.”

P——’s EPISTLE TO MISS ——.

GLASGOW:

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

1799.



P R E F A C E.

A VARIETY of reasons, which rendered it proper to delay the publication of the following Epistle, having ceased to influence the Author, he now submits his performance to the examination of the Public. It is styled a First Epistle, because the subject being agreeable, and the theme copious, the Writer flatters himself with the hope of addressing a Second, and perhaps a Third, to the Fair and Well-beloved Disciples.

The person who has commenced a literary career is induced to persevere in writing, because his Productions please, or because they displease. If they give satisfaction, he is prompted by the benevolence of his own heart to gratify his readers with additional pleasure; if, on the contrary, they give of-

fence, he is urged by a regard for character and interest, to write again, with a view of rectifying errors, removing prejudices, and persuading those whom he may have offended to forget and forgive: Hence, a passion for writing has, in the emphatical language of metaphor, been termed an Incurable Itch.

It is hoped that the tenour of the production will not justify any suspicion that the design of publishing it was of a personal or malevolent nature.

Be't mine, to give, benevolently free,
'The fair their due; they never injur'd me,

PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE

TO

THE DEARLY BELOVED

THE

FEMALE DISCIPLES.

THE shrewd, the learn'd, the sage, the am'rous Jew,
Who whilom chanted, "There is nothing new,"
O'ershot the mark; had he in Clutha seen
A thousand beauties, wife as Sheba's queen,
Who to the toilet, tea-table, and ball, 5
Prefer, O novelty! the classic hall;
And with more favour dignify the youth
Who calls their minds to philosophic truth,
Than him who strives their bosoms to assail
With all the pathos of romantic tale; 10
The sapient monarch ne'er had rais'd the cry,
That books and women were all vanity.

O'erwhelm'd with wonder, I the fair survey
Unsex themselves to bear the palm away
From studious youngsters, who but lately shone 15
In learning's walks, unrivall'd and alone.

No more the pedant's academic boast
 Shall speak contempt of the unletter'd toast,
 For now each maid a scholar's name assumes,
 And as her beauty fades her wisdom blooms ; 20
 Far other cares the virgin's soul employ
 Than love's soft ecstasy and childish joy ;
 Sublimer studies all her mind engage ;
 No more she reads the novel's witching page,
 The melting nonsense, late the sex's pride, 25
 Their scandal now, 's for ever laid aside :
 Where near the toilet of the lady gay
 Clarissa's fate, or Werter's sorrows, lay,
 Now Bacon, Barrow, Newton, are display'd,
 Each ponderous volume in due order laid. 30

No more the coxcomb, with unmeaning smile,
 And senseless prattle, shall her hours beguile ;
 For 'tis not Venus, with her wanton train,
 Who went to frolic on the Paphian plain,
 But Venus, brilliant in the lofty sphere, 35
 Whose name is music to the fair one's ear.

Prophetic fears my patriot breast alarm,
 Heav'n shield this land, this sinful land, from harm !
 I fear this change of manners will create
 Some awful revolution in the state : 40
 When foes approach'd to lay whole cities low,
 Cows have foretold the coming overthrow ;
 When death draws nigh, Miss Puppy's howlings rise ;
 And pigs, before the storm's approach, are wise ;

Then what disasters may not mankind dread, 45
 When woman shakes a philosophic head?

What frenzy, my dear ladies, can impel
 Your steps to enter the forbidden cell?
 To mix with men in colleges and schools,
 Whom learning makes but more illustrious fools? 50
 For what to you the laws which nature guide,
 You, nature's chief perfection and her pride?
 Or, what the paths in which the planets roll,
 While you direct the motions of the soul?
 Let wither'd dotards, whom nor beauty charms, 55
 Nor wit engages, nor ev'n love alarms,
 Delight to trace the Moon's nocturnal way,
 Or teach the Comet in what path to stray;
 Be't yours, by every gentle female art,
 To guide the wand'rings of the human heart. 60

Forbear, bright dames, to calculate the tides,
 The ebbs and flows o'er which the Moon presides,
 But let your thoughts to your own hearts retire,
 And curb the overflowings of desire.

To man, poor man, in this grief-chequer'd life, 65
 What curse is greater than a learned wife?
 The household cares, and the parental pains,
 Which other wives submit to, she disdains;
 To rear her offspring wholly disinclin'd,
 To books, plans, problems, she resigns her mind. 70
 Perhaps she writes, and, half-uncover'd, stands
 In dressing room, with papers in her hands,

Nor heeds the valet, who, on passing by,
 May at her beauties glance a wishful eye ;
 For, wrapt in thought, and crown'd with self-applause,
 She thinks herself above the critic's laws. 76

When lovely woman quits her proper sphere,
 Begins to argue, menace, domineer,
 And study different systems, which perplex,
 And warp the mind, she loses half her sex. 80

There is, or ought to be, I know not why,
 A modest lustre in the virgin's eye,
 A soft, a sweet expression in her face,
 A winning coyness, a reluctant grace,
 In which the captivated lover may 85
 A pretty childish ignorance survey.

But when she, with authoritative mien,
 Stern eye, and looks of conscious power, is seen,
 And talents more than feminine displays,
 While humbled suitors at a distance gaze, 90
 On her our eyes will undefiring rove,
 We may revere her, but we cannot love.

Here let me pause ; lest ladies should accuse
 The seeming censure of the playful muse.
 Forbid it, gallantry, that I should blame 95
 The mental graces of a lovely dame,
 Or tell the virgin that she is less fair,
 Because her mind has challeng'd half her care :
 Dull and inanimate the face appears,
 Though brighten'd by the glow of blooming years,

Which no expression of internal woe, 101
 No varying tint of sympathy, can show ;
 Whose eyes ne'er bright with beaming pleasure roll,
 Nor indicate the transport of the soul.

I hate the dark, disastrous, dismal face, 105
 Where no mild ray Lavater's eye could trace ;
 And I abhor the courtier's flattering wile,
 Where dwells the grin of an eternal smile.
 The face, whose changing lineaments agree
 With varying passions, ever pleases me : 110
 And what more fit to give this air refin'd
 To outward features, than a polish'd mind ?

Proceed, sweet ladies, to collect a store
 Of useful knowledge, and to pant for more.
 To future times great blessings will accrue 115
 From this desire of literature in you ;
 The infant, seated on his nurse's knee,
 In place of baubles, shall delighted see
 Nice combinations of mechanic powers,
 Complex machines to indicate the hours, 120
 Pneumatic tubes, electrifying wheels,
 The magic lantern which at once conceals
 And shows the objects ; he their names and ends
 Will understand before he knows his friends.
 The studious boy shall with attentive ear 125
 The learned lectures of his mother hear,
 Who, all enraptur'd with the task, explains
 The cause of thunders, hurricanes, and rains ;

And from the vapour in the kettle pent,
 Raising the lid, and struggling to get vent, 130
 Describes the powerful influence of steam ;
 And from the vase's tepid spouting stream
 The hydrostatic principles defines,
 And moral truths with physical combines :
 Thus shall a future progeny arise, 135
 Brave as their fires, and as their mothers wife.
 These mam-taught pupils nobly will disdain
 Infantile frolics on the grassy plain,
 But to their studies dedicate their time,
 And pastime deem no ordinary crime. 140
 This for a globe shall give away his top,
 That change his whistle for a telescope.

AS worn with toils and pleasures of the day
 On midnight couch I late reposing lay,
 While half asleep, and half awake, I try'd 145
 A new position, and a change of side ;
 Dreams, visions, phantoms, a still restless train,
 The mix'd delirium of a flumb'ring brain,
 Around me hover'd ; not that trivial sort
 Which oft the lover's wand'ring fancy court. 150
 It was not Jenny, lively, sweet, and gay,
 Nor Betty, blooming as the rosy May ;
 It was not Nanny's soft and snowy breast,
 On which I wont my love-sick head to rest,
 Nor Nelly's aspect, radiant and serene, 155
 Nor all th' inviting charms of bonny Jean ;

But apparitions of sublimer kind,
 Which entertain'd and edify'd my mind.
 Methought, that wand'ring far away from home
 My steps approach'd a philosophic dome, 160
 Whose structure, circled by a triple wood,
 Like equilateral triangle stood ;
 A pair of compasses, with giant stride,
 Sustain'd a door struck out on ev'ry side ;
 And at each angle of this wond'rous pile, 165
 Through glass-prismatic, rainbow colours smile.
 The gentle motion of the op'ning gate
 Caus'd thrice three pendulums to oscillate,
 By which nine bells, with sudden tinkling din,
 Dispatch'd th' alarm to ev'ry hall within. 170

As to advance, and to retire, I fear'd,
 A female in fantastic garb appear'd ;
 Youth deck'd her cheek, and beauty from her eye
 Shot piercing beams ; the azure of the sky
 Expanded o'er her floating robes was seen, 175
 With intermixtures of red, white, and green ;
 Upon her head, with yellow lustre shone
 An oval cap, the basis of a cone ;
 A belt obliquely round her waist entwines,
 On which are figur'd the twelve heav'nly signs ; 180
 The Ram and Goat upon her back she bore,
 And with the Twins the Pisces swam before ;
 The Bull and Balance her right shoulder grac'd,
 And central in the front was Virgo plac'd.

She view'd my habit with inquiring eye, 185
 And thus exclaim'd : " If from the starry sky
 Dispatch'd you come, or from among the swains,
 Where *Ætna's* Lava desolates the plains ;
 Or if from climes, where spring eternal smiles,
 You come with products of the Happy Isles ; 190
 Whate'er your office, or whoe'er you be,
 The dinner waits, your visit honours me."

Invited thus, I humbly bow the head,
 And 'cross the intersected passage tread.
 New wonder seiz'd me as I view'd the hall, 195
 The roof star-studded, and the figur'd wall ;
 Seven piles of meat were on the table rear'd,
 And soon the Philosophic Guests appear'd.
 One held a chain, by which was instant sent
 A shock electric ; the whole chorus bent 200
 With sudden start ; then each assum'd his place,
 Thus appetiz'd, and ask'd no other grace.

A Planetarium, skilfully dispos'd,
 Stood for a table, by the guests enclos'd ;
 The Sun, a round of good saltpetred beef, 205
 Which gave the hoping hungry eye relief ;
 In *Merc'ry's* orbit three warm chickens stood,
 And *Venus* was a codfish fresh and good ;
 The Earth was made of liver, heart, and tripe,
 And *Mars* was woodcock, partridge, plover, snipe ;
 A bacon ham *Jove's* circuit occupy'd, 211
 And *Saturn* with potatoes was supply'd ;

And frozen cream, plac'd from the centre far,
Possess'd the orbit of the Georgial Star.

Th' attendant Planets, rang'd in order nice, 215
Were fauces, fallads, mustard, jelly, spice,
While, comet-like, a highly season'd tongue,
By Sol attracted, o'er the centre hung.

A menial, standing two young guests between,
The handle turn'd, and mov'd the grand machine.

Revolving planets now attention draw, 221
Their motions guided by a certain law ;
As taste directs, or fancy prompts, each one,
This falls on Mars, and that attacks the Sun.

A lengthen'd engine, at whose end were made 225
A fork, a hook, a shovel, and a spade,
Was us'd, the central viands to divide,
And bring the fragments to the outer side.

I cast on Jove an avaricious eye,
But waited long before his orb drew nigh ; 230
Resolv'd some other planet to assail,
I Venus chose, and caught her by the tail.

But now the system falls into decay,
The distant planets quickly fade away ;
Mars, Venus, Mercury, withhold their light, 235
And Sol is sunk in everlasting night ;
Earth's various beauties are to ruin hurl'd,
And chaos reigns the sovereign of the world.

Soon as the former universe withdrew,
A new creation caught the ravish'd view ; 240

A globe enormous in an instant rose,
 Which paste and pudding, pies and tarts, compose,
 Mov'd round its axis with continual dance,
 Here sinks Germania, and there rises France :
 The rising country draws the gaze of all ; 245
 But they neglect the nations as they fall.

Three sober guests, who grac'd the northern side,
 Prepare a single kingdom to divide ;
 They ask no more than mere support of life,
 And against Poland aim a triple knife ; 250
 With temperate eye the inner food explore,
 Each takes a gulp, and Poland is no more.

So when three schoolboys amicably join
 From widow's shop an orange to purloin,
 Among themselves they uprightly and fair 255
 Divide the spoil, and each receives a share,
 The injur'd widow justly may complain,
 " And rage she may, but she shall rage in vain."

The globe demolish'd, we our cares resign,
 And drown reflection in large draughts of wine. 260
 The glasses are in mathematic style,
 Here stands a cube, and there a conic pile ;
 Triangles, spheroids, heptagons arise,
 And sparkling polygons delight our eyes.

The banquet o'er, carousals at an end, 265
 We to the tea-room airily ascend ;
 The moving cieling quick is drawn aside,
 And ropes and pulleys, chairs uprising, guide ;

Ascending rapid, my frail cable broke,
 I headlong fell, and in my fall awoke, 270
 And scorn'd the vision, counting it a joke.

But something whisper'd : " Unbelieving finner !
 Dost thou condemn a philosophic dinner ?
 Ere long shall ev'ry literary dame
 Deem feasting otherwise a monstrous shame ; 275
 And should you gibe them, or in verse, or prose,
 At such repasts you'll ne'er dare show your nose ;
 And if you mean a learned nymph to woo,
 You must nor sigh, nor, like a turtle, coo ;
 But, like true chemist, 'mid your sweets dilute 280
 A little acid to promote your suit,
 And contradictions skilfully prepare,
 And blend them justly to delight the fair ;
 So shall your words, judiciously combin'd,
 Like pleasant punch, subdue the virgin's mind." 285

Your pardon, Ladies, if I argue wrong ;
 A few words more, I'll not detain you long.
 With raptur'd eye, prophetic, I see
 A tribe of learned nymphs convene to tea ;
 Slander, a sprite, from whose polluted tongue 290
 Envy, disgust, deceit, and discord, sprung,
 By truth expell'd, now leads a horrid dance,
 Exulting 'mid the massacres of France ;
 And white-rob'd candour, innocently sweet,
 Possesses now the abdicated feat. 295

No ancient maids, in pallid legions, dare
 Attack the nymph whose face is more than fair,

For some mild speaker at each table draws,
 From all around, attention and applause ;
 No naturalist can better analyse 300
 The limbs of ants, the wings of butterflies,
 Than she the beauteous lecturer harangue
 On coffee, chocolate, bohea, fouchong.

Happy the man, who, friend to lazy life,
 Is mated with a literary wife ! 305

For if, ambitious to display his art
 To bid disease's baleful train depart
 From humankind, he studies night and day,
 His helpmate kindly smoothes the rugged way.
 If at the bar he wishes to appear, 310
 To move the passions, and extort the tear,
 His partner, skill'd in ev'ry art to please,
 Shall teach him volubility and ease.

If sermon manufacture be his care,
 His spouse's hands shall the discourse prepare, 315 }
 While he lolls tranquil in an easy chair.

Ladies, farewell, be such pursuits your care,
 As or become or dignify the fair ;
 So shall you lead mankind in filken chains,
 While in their breasts a sense of worth remains ; 320
 So shall the good be subject to your law,
 And, at your nod, the vicious stand in awe,
 The youthful heart betray its soft alarms,
 And bards enamour'd celebrate your charms. 324

TO THE
FEMALE STUDENTS OF GEOGRAPHY,
AIR ACADEMY,
ON THE APPROACH OF A SUMMER VACATION.

Go, charming maids, to flow'ry plains,
And bear my heart-felt love along,
Bid rapture seize the gazing swains,
The meads, the banks of Air among. 4

And while you tread the daisy'd lawn,
And brush away the pearly dew,
Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
And blooming health, will welcome you. 8

The flow'r sequester'd in the vale,
Which seems to shun the gazer's eye,
Will tell an emblematic tale
Of sweet and virgin modesty. 12

Among the lambkins on the green,
Which, harmlessly, disporting rove
In kindred parties, shall be seen
The bliss of innocence and love. 16

The feather'd choristers, whose throats
 Pour cheerful caroling, will show
 How sweetly charming are the notes
 Which from a grateful bosom flow. 20

'Mong rural scenes, while pleas'd you roam,
 Let fancy traverse o'er and o'er
 The climes, near and remote from home,
 Thro' which your minds have stray'd before. 24

So, when the love-sick youths appear,
 And, ceaseless, court you to be kind,
 They in your aspects will revere
 The beaming beauty of the mind. 28

Go, charming maids, to flow'ry plains,
 And bear my heart-felt love along,
 Bid rapture seize the gazing swains,
 The meads, the banks of Air among. 32



